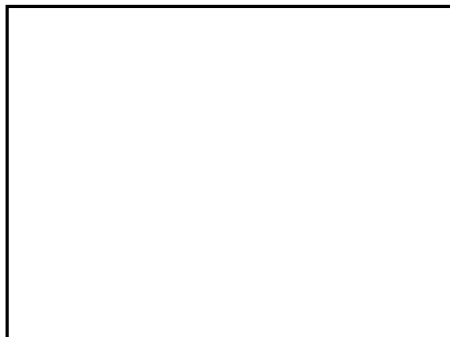


STATINTL



26 February 1973

A contributor recently sent me the attached article from "Guns" magazine dated January 1968. Compared with the information I now have in my files, the attached article is very poorly researched, unfortunately. However, one point stands out. The author of that article stated that the information he requested was deemed as "Classified" information by the CIA. This seems to me that the CIA has information on this weapon dealing with its utilization and distribution during World War 2. Since your office is a facet of that organization I was wondering if you could verify this for me? If you are unable to do so could you suggest to whom I could write at the Agency for their comments and whether or not this information is still classified.

Also attached is a recent news clipping. On the assumption that this possible change may generate a more lenient information release policy, concerning the afore mentioned weapon, I have taken the liberty to include it with this letter.

Once again your comments and suggestions would be welcomed.

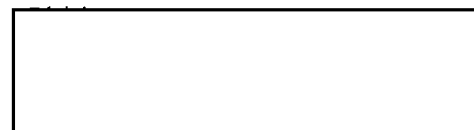
Attachments (2)

Sincerely,

R.W. Koch

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R.W. KOCH



Major shake up in CIA reported

NEW YORK (AP) — The new director of the Central Intelligence Agency acting on orders from President Nixon, is making major changes in the CIA's hierarchy, it was reported Saturday.

The New York Times and the Daily News said it had been learned from sources in Washington that CIA director James R. Schlesinger is attempting to trim bureaucracy

and four key officials already have been singled out for early retirement.

Schlesinger replaced Richard Helms, who was named ambassador to Iran.

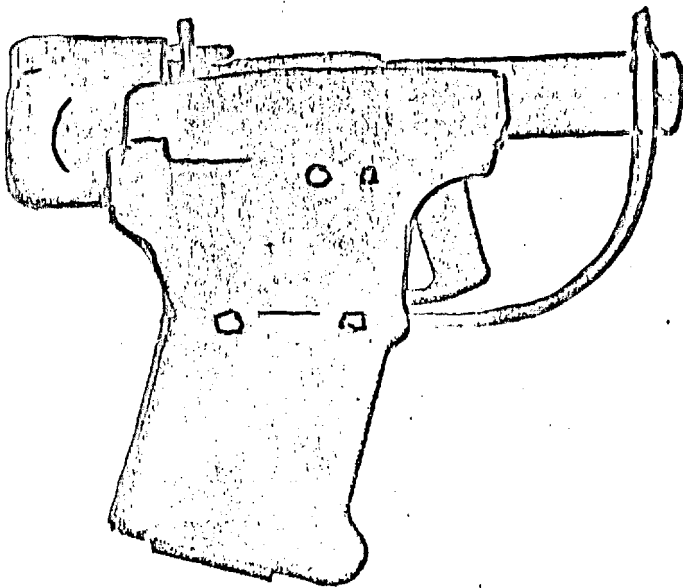
Both newspapers identified two of those who are leaving as Thomas H. Karamessines, director of clandestine services, and Laurence Houston, the agency's general counsel.

D ID YOU EVER GET the feeling that somebody was putting you on? I did, when I tried to find out what happened to almost a million pistols.

The guns in question were the so-called "Underground" single shot pistols made during World War II. In 1942, the OSS (Office of Strategic Services) requested a quantity of cheap, throw-away guns, which were to be air-dropped to the underground forces of occupied Europe and Asia. What evolved was a gun of simple design with a barrel of seamless steel tubing, so simple in fact that it was not rifled. The guns were chambered for the .45 ACP cartridge, and were sheet metal stampings, held together by spot welding. This single shot had no ejector, instead, the pistol was furnished with a wooden dowel. With each pistol came an instruction sheet, shown here, which was in the universal language of simple drawings—no matter where it landed, the recipient could understand the functioning of the gun. The contract for the pistols went to the Guide Lamp Division of General Motors, who tooled up and produced one million guns in the fantastic time of only thirteen weeks.

In the years since the war, this basic information on the pistol has been well known, but there it ended. A few of the pistols have turned up in the hands of gun collectors, and there are several in various museums. The pistols were there, but what of its use, if it were ever used? I had read much about the war, but never found a reference to the pistol, or even a hint that it had served its purpose, so I started to snoop.

When one thinks of the Underground, the first country that comes to mind is France. I telephone the French Consul General in Chicago, and although he had been in the Resistance in Tunisia, he had never seen or heard of this pistol.



A letter addressed to the Guide Lamp Division of General Motors brought a courteous reply. In effect, it said that they had no information on the pistol since "at the time it was produced it was handled in a very confidential manner by the government." They advised me to check with a branch of the government, but could not say which one.

So I wrote to the appropriate branch, namely the CIA, a lineal descendant of the OSS. In due course, I received a large manila envelope with no return address, and with the flap sealed with tamper-proof tape; in the best cloak and dagger tradition. I opened the envelope in a dark corner of my room, also in the best tradition of the secret services, and found that the information I wanted was "classified."

I went back to my thoughts that perhaps the French might still have the answer, so a letter went off to the French "Pentagon." I received a reply from an officer who, to the best of my knowledge is "Chief Engineer" of the French Army. He stated that the Underground Pistol was unknown to them, and certainly none were ever issued to the French Army. He suggested that we inquire of the CIA—but you know how that turned out.

One of the most interesting letters I received from my inquiries came from the Paris Chief of Police, M. Roland Faugere:

"I have the honor to inform you that the Police Scientific Laboratory at the Prefecture has in its collection a pistol, caliber .45 ACP, without mark or number, of American origin, with characteristics corresponding to the one described and pictured in your letter.

"This office has no historical documentation on this arm and it is therefore impossible for me to tell you if it was used in Europe during World War II, or if any are now in the hands of private citizens. I assure you that up to this time no crime has been committed with this type of weapon in the region of Paris."

Although this was of little help, except to tell me that if the missing thousands of guns were in France, they hadn't been found by the criminals, as yet, there were other sources. I inquired of many of my gun bug friends who were in Europe and Asia during the war. What did I get? Almost nothing. From scores of those who were in the Philippines, "a few." From those in France, "nothing."

The only mention of this pistol in Europe came from Jerry Tuttle, of Wilmette, Ill. He was stationed in Munich after the shooting stopped, and his outfit was sent to a nearby DP camp to shake it down for weapons. They picked up an armored car full of various firearms, including "five or six" underground pistols. So there we are: a "few" in the Philippines and "five or six" in Europe. This still leaves quite a few out of a million, doesn't it?

The pistols were, at the time they were delivered to the OSS, well wrapped in stout cardboard boxes, well waxed for waterproofing, and each box contained ten rounds of ammunition. If they had not been unpacked, they should still be in good condition—but where are they, those missing 999,990 pistols?